

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7111
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PANAMA 03545

LIMDIS

CARACAS FOR PASTOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PN
SUBJECT: TALK WITH TORRIJOS

1. BOB PASTOR (NSC) AND I HAD A TALK WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS DURING JUST-COMPLETED VISIT OF WHITE HOUSE PRE-ADVANCE GROUP. TORRIJOS WAS IN A RELAXED AND COOPERATIVE MOOD. ALSO PRESENT WERE FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALEZ REVILLA AND AMBASSADOR GABRIEL LEWIS. DISCUSSION OCCURRED AT TORRIJOS' VILLAGE HIDEAWAY IN COCLECITO AND LASTED ABOUT TWO HOURS.

2. FIRST SUBJECT DISCUSSED WAS POSSIBLE JOINT STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT CARTER, TORRIJOS AND VISITING LATIN PRESIDENTS DURING CARTER VISIT JUNE 16-17. PASTOR SAID HE THOUGHT SUCH STATEMENT MIGHT FOCUS ON THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS--(A) GUARANTEES OF PEACE, RESTRICTIONS ON ARMS PURCHASES IN AREA, AND MAKING LATIN AMERICA A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE; (B) HUMAN RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES OF JUSTICE; (C) ECONOMIC ISSUES, E.G., TRADE, COMMODITY PRICES, ETC.
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3. TORRIJOS' REACTION WAS QUITE POSITIVE. HE NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALEZ REVILLA WOULD BE TRAVELING TO BOGOTA AND CARACAS NEXT WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY TO EXTEND FORMAL INVITATIONS FOR VISIT TO PANAMA BY PRESIDENTS LOPEZ MICHELSEN AND ANDRES PEREZ. HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH HIM POSSIBILITIES OF SUCH A JOINT DECLARATION. HE ASKED IF

WE COULD GET A PAPER TO HIM AS GENERAL GUIDANCE TO FOREIGN MINISTER IN ADVANCE OF HIS TRIP AND PASTOR SAID WE WOULD TRY. IN CONNECTION WITH LIMITATIONS ON ARMS TRANSACTIONS, TORRIJOS SAID HE COULD VISUALIZE SOME KIND OF QUOTE GENERAL STAFF UNQUOTE OPERATING UNDER UNITED NATIONS OR OAS TO INSPECT AND REPORT ON PERFORMANCE OF PARTICIPATING STATES.

4. SECOND MAJOR SUBJECT COVERED WAS PANAMANIAN REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OF LAND IN COCO SOLO AREA FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CONTAINER PORT. PASTOR EXPLAINED DIFFICULTIES WE FORESAW WITH CONGRESS ON THIS ISSUE--ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF UPCOMING CONSIDERATION OF IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION. HE ALSO DESCRIBED LEGAL PROBLEMS WE WOULD HAVE UNDER A LICENSING ARRANGEMENT--E.G., REQUIREMENT TO ABIDE BY U.S. LAWS, INCLUDING MINIMUM WAGE, ETC. TORRIJOS SAID HE UNDERSTOOD PROBLEMS AND HE BELIEVED THERE WAS NO MAJOR DIFFICULTY IN WAITING FOR QUOTE SEVERAL MONTHS UNQUOTE BEFORE MOVING AHEAD. MEANTIME, HE SAID, STUDY OR PROJECT COULD CONTINUE AND PERHAPS PANAMANIAN COULD MOVE AHEAD WITH PREPARATORY WORK--SUCH AS BUILDING PREFABRICATED SECTIONS OF CONTAINER PORT BUILDINGS AND THE LIKE.

5. THIRD SUBJECT RAISED BY PASTOR WAS QUESTION OF PANAMANIAN OPENING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS. HE SAID WE HAD HEARD PANAMA MIGHT BE CONSIDERING THIS.
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TORRIJOS SAID HE WAS IN NO HURRY ON THIS MATTER. HE SAID THAT EVERYTHING PANAMA DID IN COMING MONTHS HAD TO BE IN CONTEXT OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD QUOTE WORRY PRESIDENT CARTER UNQUOTE. HE ALSO REMARKED THAT HIS NATIONAL GUARD AND U.S. ARMED FORCES WOULD BE WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER IN THE YEAR AHEAD AND INDICATED THIS WOULD HELP SET MANY CONCERNS AT REST.

6. TORRIJOS THEN LAUNCHED INTO A MONOLOGUE EXPRESSING HIS STRONG FEELING THAT UNITED STATES SHOULD BE MAKING SOME CONCILIATORY GESTURES TOWARD GROUPS LIKE SANDINISTAS IN NICARAGUA AND MONTONEROS IN ARGENTINA. HE ARGUED WE SHOULD BE OPENING THE DOOR TO DIALOG WITH MANY DISSIDENT GROUPS IN LATIN AMERICA--WITH LEFT AND RIGHT, WITH INTELLECTUALS, WITH THOSE WHO OPPOSE MILITARY RULE AND DICTATORSHIP. HE SAID THIS APPROACH WOULD GIVE U.S. AND OUR PRESIDENT QUOTE BETTER IMAGE UNQUOTE IN THIS HEMISPHERE. HE SAID HE WAS TALKING FREQUENTLY WITH VENEZUELA'S PEREZ ABOUT THIS GENERAL SUBJECT. PASTOR EXPLAINED WHY ANY DIRECT APPROACH WITH GROUPS LIKE SANDINISTAS OR MONTONEROS WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL AT THIS TIME. TORRIJOS' BASIC ARGUMENT

WAS THAT MANY OF THESE QUOTE REVOLUTIONARIES UNQUOTE COULD
BE WEANED FROM CUBAN INFLUENCE WITH INTELLIGENT APPROACH
BY DEMOCRATIC STATES.

7. THERE WAS BRIEF DISCUSSION OF BELIZE PROBLEM. TORRIJOS
EXPRESSED OPINION THAT BELIZE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE AT LEAST
A SMALL SLICE OF TERRITORY AS PRICE OF WINNING GUATEMALAN
AGREEMENT AND SAVING FACE FOR GUATEMALAS MILITARY. HE
THOUGHT THIS CONCESSION SHOULD BE BALANCED FOR BELIZE BY
OFFERING LATTER SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 03545

LIMDIS

CARACAS FOR PASTOR

8. FINAL SUBJECT RAISED BY PASTOR CONCERNED FUTURE OF
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF UPCOMING
PREPARATORY SESSION IN BELGRADE AND LATER CONFERENCE IN
HAVANA. PASTOR WONDERED IF COUNTRIES LIKE PANAMA COULD NOT
MAKE MORE OF AN ISSUE IN NON-ALIGNED CIRCLES OF CUBA'S
BLATANT INTERVENTION IN AFRICA. HE NOTED THAT HAM WAS FREE
IN ITS CRITICISM OF U.S. AND OTHER NON-COMMUNIST STATES
BUT THAT THE WORLD NEVER HEARD A WORD OF CRITICISM OF
SOVIETS OR CUBANS WHO WERE OPENLY INTERVENING IN OTHER
COUNTRIES.

9. TORRIJOS TRIED TO LAUGH OFF THIS SUBJECT BY ARGUING THAT
LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WERE NOT THAT UNHAPPY ABOUT CUBA'S
INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA. HE SAID THEY BELIEVED THAT AS LONG
AS CUBAN MILITARY WAS OCCUPIED IN AFRICA THEY DID NOT HAVE
TO WORRY ABOUT CASTRO GETTING INVOLVED IN AFFAIRS OF NEAR

NEIGHBORS. BUT AFTER HEARING COUNTER ARGUMENTS, TORRIJOS SAID HE WOULD GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO POINTS WE HAD MADE, HIS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE LOOKING INTO THIS MATTER AT THE BELGRADE MEETING. HE SAID HE HIMSELF WAS PLANNING TRIP
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TO CUBA LATER THIS YEAR AND HE PLANNED TO USE THAT OCCASION TO MAKE SOME CRITICAL REMARKS REGARDING CUBAN INTERVENTION-ISM.

10. PASTOR HAD BRIEF PRIVATE TALK WITH TORRIJOS AFTER ABOVE AND WILL BE SUPPLEMENTING THIS REPORT WITH ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON.JORDEN

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